

77 01893

ASSESSMENT LABORATORY MODEL FIRE CAPTAIN PROMOTIONAL EXAMINATION DEVELOPED FOR CITY OF PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

Civil service Examinations Palo Alto
" " " " U.S.
Occupations Fire protection



Santa Clara county

West Valley College

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL
STUDIES LIBRARY

OCT 2 1975

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CENTER FOR SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT
44 East Latimer Avenue/Campbell, California 95008

MARCH 1974

IPA FUNDED PROJECT
(73CA23C)

77 01893

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES LIBRARY
109 PHILOSOPHY HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CA 94720

47 01893

This behavior-based selection model was designed by the Center for Supervision and Management Development of the West Valley Community College in conjunction with an I.P.A. funded study of assessment laboratories.

The model was developed for the City of Palo Alto's Fire Captain Promotional Examination. While it is valid for the City of Palo Alto, those who wish to use the model are cautioned to refer to Sections 1607.7 and 1607.9 of the E.E.O.C. Testing and Selection Guidelines.

*

*

*

The West Valley Community College, located in the western part of Santa Clara County, California, operates the Center for Supervision and Management Development. In the Spring of 1973, the Center was awarded an I.P.A. grant through the California Advisory Coordinating Council on Public Personnel Management to determine if assessment labs are feasible for use in government operations in terms of their performance vs. the cost of conducting them.

*

*

*

CENTER FOR SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT
44 East Latimer Avenue
Campbell, California 95008
Telephone: 408-379-0161

I.P.A. Project Director: J. David Harris

Assessment Laboratory Coordinator: Donald S. Macrae

FIRE CAPTAIN PROMOTIONAL EXAMINATION
ASSESSMENT LAB MODEL (FOR 20 CANDIDATES)

Ratio of Observers, or Raters, to Candidates: One:Two.
(Ideally the number of candidates would be a multiple of five or six.)

OBSERVERS TEAM

- 1 Firefighter (Department Member*)
- 1 Fire Engineer (Department Member*)
- 2 Fire Captains (1 Department Member*, 1 Outsider)
- 2 Battalion Chiefs (1 Department Member*, 1 Outsider)
- 1 Agency Personnel Staff Member
- 1 Management Center Staff Member
- 2 Management Center Consultants

*Selected by all candidates who took the written examination from among the Fire Department Personnel who did not participate in that exam. The written examination preceded the Assessment Lab.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA SUGGESTIONS: See Attachment, Page 10.

LAB DESIGN: A STRUCTURED EXPERIENCE TO PROVIDE A PROBLEM-SOLVING PERFORMANCE TEST

Prior to the administration of the Assessment Lab, a full day was devoted to orienting the raters and involving them in the actual exercises. They were carefully instructed in the art of observing behavior and recording their observations accurately.

The test involved participation by the candidates in an "in-basket" exercise; a leaderless group exercise; a five minute individual oral presentation; an unstructured group discussion requiring solutions and consensus; and one requiring written recommendations and consensus.

These exercises were designed to elicit certain behavioral characteristics which were predetermined to be essential for success as a Fire Captain. The candidates' demonstrations of these characteristics were rated by the specially trained raters comprising the Observers Team. The variables to be measured were: communication skills, composure and self-control, decision-making under pressure, leadership, production and quality of ideas, perception and analysis, organizing and planning, flexibility, and interpersonal relations.

Exercise 1 was an "In-Basket" simulation including materials obtained from the Fire Department and designed to find out how sensitive the candidates were to management problems at the Fire Captain's level. The memos from the "In-Basket" were phrased in the vernacular of the Fire Department and represented personnel and organizational problems suggested by the Department. (The candidates functioned individually.)

Exercise 2 was called the "Officers' Conference" and was designed to discover how the candidates would deal with current problems of the Fire Department and which of them would assume leadership in an

unstructured group situation. (The candidates were divided into two groups.)

Exercise 3 was entitled "Firehouse" and tested for both leadership and interpersonal relations. (The candidates were divided into two groups.)

Exercise 4 was a "PTA Presentation" which required each candidate to make a five minute oral presentation. (The candidates were separated and each made a presentation to five raters. Two candidates were processed simultaneously.)

Exercise 5 was called "The Future" and required the candidates to make individual written recommendations on plans and suggestions for the year 1984, based on the current situation and the experience of the past ten years (10 minutes). Next, discussions by sub-groups of five candidates were to produce consensus and written recommendations (20 minutes), which were then used as a basis for discussion by large groups of ten candidates to yield final consensus and written recommendations (1 hour).

For further details please see SCHEDULE and descriptions of the individual exercises attached.

The raters (observers) compiled individual evaluations during each of the exercises. They spent the following full day session in further consideration of all the factors as they evaluated all of the candidates on an overall basis.

In preparing for the Assessment Lab, close liaison was maintained with the Fire Administration and the Firefighters' Union. One preliminary meeting and a final meeting were held with the representatives of the Union to establish rapport and confidence in the process.

It was agreed that the Fire Chief, or his designated representative, would be able to be present at all times during the orientation, the Assessment Lab and the evaluation as an observer. The same was true for the Union Representative.

Rapport and confidence on the part of the men of the Fire Department was a very important contribution to the success of the Assessment Lab.

Each candidate was interviewed individually by the Fire Department after the Assessment Lab. By being made aware of his personal strengths and weaknesses as revealed by the promotional process, he could use it as an educational experience for personal development.

Two evaluations were elicited from the candidates: one immediately after the exercises and the second after the interviews had taken place. At that time, evaluations were also requested from each of the observers and from the Union Representative. These evaluations were used by the Management Center to make improvements in the Assessment Lab process.

The Management Center is currently considering the addition of a one-to-one exercise. Also being considered is the possibility of scheduling the "PTA Presentation" as an "interruption" to the "In-Basket" in the interests of shortening the day for the participants.

SCHEDULE

8:30 to 8:45	Introduction
8:45 to 10:15	"In-Basket"
10:15 to 10:25	Break
10:25 to 10:30	Instructions
10:30 to 11:30	"Officers' Conference"
11:30 to 12:30	Lunch
12:30 to 12:35	Instructions
12:35 to 1:35	"Firehouse"
1:35 to 1:45	Break
1:45 to 1:50	Instructions
1:50 to 2:45	"PTA Presentation"
2:45 to 2:55	Break
2:55 to 3:00	Instructions
3:00 to 4:30	"The Future"
4:30 to 5:00	Participants' Evaluation
5:00 to 5:30	Meeting of Observers

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
State of California and California State Library

<https://archive.org/details/C123319835>

ASSIGNMENT OF OBSERVERS
TO CANDIDATES

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

OBSERVERS

	O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6	O-7	O-8	O-9	O-10
C-1	1	2	3	4	5					
C-2		1	2	3	4	5				
C-3			1	2	3	4	5			
C-4				1	2	3	4	5		
C-5					1	2	3	4	5	
C-6						1	2	3	4	5
C-7	5						1	2	3	4
C-8	4	5						1	2	3
C-9	3	4	5						1	2
C-10	2	3	4	5						1
C-11	5	3	1	4	2					
C-12		5	3	1	4	2				
C-13			5	3	1	4	2			
C-14				5	3	1	4	2		
C-15					5	3	1	4	2	
C-16						5	3	1	4	2
C-17	2						5	3	1	4
C-18	4	2						5	3	1
C-19	1	4	2						5	3
C-20	3	1	4	2						5

C means Candidate

O means Observer

Numbers in columns (1,2,3,4,5) indicate number of Test: 1 - In-Basket, etc.

THE IN-BASKET

You are Captain John Doe, Company Officer of Engine Company Number 4, "A" Shift, of the Fire Department. You have just been presented with a packet of written material that would typically be on the desk of a Fire Captain. You must respond to each of the 12 items in your in-basket.

This is an exercise requiring written communication skills. In those instances where you would give a verbal response, write "Verbal Response" and then write out what your verbal response would be.

When responding to the items in your in-basket, don't tell what you would do -- do it!

Most items have been Xeroxed so that you can write your responses on the reverse side. A sheet is attached for your written response on the other items unless the situation calls for a direct answer on the form.

Also included in your in-basket is an organization chart and a shift schedule for the current year.

You will be given one and one-half hours to complete the exercise. Apportion your time accordingly.

BE SURE TO WRITE YOUR NAME ON EACH ITEM.

Note: In the actual exercise there will be two interrupting telephone messages presented to the candidates for action. There will be no prior announcement. It is suggested that they be spaced for 30 minutes and 60 minutes after the start of the exercise.

THE OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

This is the morning for the Battalion Chief's Officers' Conference. Just prior to the meeting the Battalion Chief called in to advise that he was taking his wife to the hospital for an emergency operation. He asked that the Conference not be cancelled as there were items on the Agenda that Chief Smith wanted discussed, and recommendations were to be forwarded for his immediate consideration.

The Agenda items are as follows:

1. Energy Crisis - Department Cut-backs and Where.
2. Affirmative Action Program - Recommendation for Firefighter Involvement.
3. Evaluation of Effectiveness of Fire Extinguisher Program.
4. Safety Shoes - Who Should Provide and Why?
5. High School Student Work Experience Program - Recommendations.
6. Should the Fire Department Get Involved in Home Inspection Programs?
7. Development of Plan for Employment of Women in the Fire Department.

FIREHOUSE

Overall Situation:

You are one of the ____ firefighters staffing the Firehouse. You are on shift 24 hours at a time. The firehouse is a clean modern building with cooking, sleeping, working and lounging facilities. Almost all of the work is performed between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., leaving the evenings free of any duty other than to be prepared to answer calls. Because of an extremely tough day, the entire crew is anxious to get to bed by 8 p.m., but there are some things that must be taken care of before anyone can do so. You do not want to cook as you have absolutely no experience. The Fire Captain called in sick and no one has yet been put in charge.

The following items must be dealt with in the next 60 minutes:

The man who regularly cooks is home sick with ptomaine poisoning, and someone else must be chosen for the next two weeks.

A model training tower must be built for a demonstration tomorrow morning for a group of twenty *Japanese firefighters. It will be used to explain ladder placement strategies.

Because of the first fight that occurred last night, a system must be established tonight on how the TV programs will be selected.

A demonstration must be conducted on how to handle a telephone call from an angry citizen. The Chief says that it must be acted out so that everyone can see it done right.

*The nationality of visiting firefighters can be changed to reflect the local situation.

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

PTA PRESENTATION
HOME FIRE DRILL

You are speaking at a local school PTA meeting, trying to get the parents to improve their preparedness for fire in their homes. There have been five bad home fires in the past four months and three children and two adults lost their lives. Two lives were lost because there was no prior evacuation plan. Opening the door with flames in the hall caused two deaths.

Although there are many things that can be done to reduce the danger of fires, it seems that a fire inspection is most important in making a person aware of the dangers. The inspection should consist of checking the garage, basement and attic for inflammables such as rags or frayed wiring. There should be an agreed upon fire evacuation plan. Opening a door with flames in the hall is most dangerous. Smoke and heat are known to be great dangers in themselves. Second story rooms need a fire escape method. Children who are not trained and practiced in fire evacuation could panic and might even run back into the house. Chances of survival in a fire can be increased by dropping to the floor where the air is cooler. Having the Fire Department phone number on the telephone is an important step in safety. Lives can be saved by knowing how to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation without becoming emotionally involved. The use of baking soda or commercial-type dry extinguishers for electric, oil, or grease fires is another measure in preventing injury by fire.

Your talk cannot exceed 5 minutes.

THE FUTURE

Your Community has experienced tremendous growth and change in the last ten years. With this in mind, the Governing Council has asked the Manager to review the experience of these past ten years, examine the current situation, and make plans and recommendations for the year 1984. The Manager, in turn, has asked each department head to consider the same things as they relate to his department and its services.

In order to obtain the broadest possible base of thought, the Fire Chief has asked that your group examine this request as it would relate to Fire Prevention. Please consider all aspects of Fire Prevention as it has existed in the Community, its current state of success or failure, and make plans and recommendations as to how Fire Prevention should be managed in 1984.

The group will be divided into sub-groups of five candidates each. In these sub-groups each candidate will have ten minutes to generate five ideas in written form for consideration by his group. The sub-group will consider these ideas for a total of twenty minutes and come to a consensus on five written proposals to be taken to the major group. The major group, in turn, will have one hour to consider the five written proposals from each sub-group and come to a consensus on five recommendations that will be put into written form for the consideration of the Chief.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

EXERCISES	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	Communication Skills	Composure and Self-control	Decision-making under Pressure	Leadership DOUBLE RATING	Production and Quality of Ideas	Perception and Analysis	Organizing and Planning	Flexibility	Interpersonal Relations	
<u>In-Basket</u> <u>1½ hours</u>	XX	XX	XX	XX		XX	XX	XX			<u>In-Basket</u> <u>1½ hours</u>
<u>Officers' Conference</u>	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	<u>Officers' Conference</u>
<u>The Future</u> <u>1½ hours</u>	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	<u>The Future</u> <u>1½ hours</u>
<u>PTA Presentation</u>	XX	XX				XX	XX	XX		XX	<u>PTA Presentation</u>
<u>Firehouse</u>	XX	XX			XX	XX		XX	XX	XX	<u>Firehouse</u>

LEADERSHIP - MAXIMUM RATING - 20
ALL OTHERS - " 10

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

EXERCISE _____ CANDIDATE _____ RATER _____

1. COMMUNICATION SKILLS: The ability to express ideas concisely and effectively both in oral and written form; to listen attentively and with comprehension to others; to give appropriate non-verbal messages and to interpret such messages when given by others. ☐ _____

2. COMPOSURE AND SELF-CONTROL: The ability to remain self-possessed in a variety of situations; to appear unflustered; to "keep his cool." ☐ _____

3. DECISION-MAKING UNDER PRESSURE: The ability to exercise rational judgment under adverse conditions; to respond to pressure situations appropriately. ☐ _____

4. LEADERSHIP: The ability to influence others; to set goals and motivate others to work toward them; to stimulate others to their optimum performance; to inspire confidence; to take control of a situation. ☐ _____

5. PRODUCTION AND QUALITY OF IDEAS: The ability to see alternative solutions to problems; to respond constructively to change; to approach problems creatively. ☐ _____

6. PERCEPTION AND ANALYSIS: The ability to define a problem; to set priorities; to sort out pertinent information; to foresee the consequences of various choices. ☐ _____

7. ORGANIZING AND PLANNING: The ability to demonstrate the rational arrangement of resources and definition of relationships. ☐ _____

8. FLEXIBILITY: The ability to adapt to new situations and priorities; a lack of rigidity in holding to a position in response to a change in demands or circumstances. ☐ _____

9. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS: The ability to get along with others; to promote cooperation; to maintain amicable relations with others under adverse conditions. ☐ _____

Model for Fire Captain Examination
 Assessment Lab, Management Center
 West Valley College
 Campbell, California
 March, 1974

RATING SUMMARY: Individual & Consensus

Name of Candidate _____

QUALITY TO BE RATED	In-Basket	Officers' Conference	Firehouse	PTA	The Future
Communication Skills	A.*	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.*	B.	B.	B.	B.
Composure & Self-Control	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Decision- making under Pressure	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Leadership	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Production and Quality of Ideas	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Perception & Analysis	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Organizing & Planning	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Flexibility	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.
Interpersonal Relations	A.	A.	A.	A.	A.
	B.	B.	B.	B.	B.

A* Rating by Individual Evaluator
 B* Rating by Consensus

(To be completed and turned in
immediately after exercises)

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

CANDIDATES' EVALUATION

From your experience in the exercises, do you think you
could be fairly rated in comparison with the other candidates?

Do you think the exercises gave you adequate opportunity
to demonstrate your potential as a fire captain?

Do you think the assessment laboratory is a good process to
use in a promotional examination such as fire captain?

Do you feel it is better or poorer than the oral interview
process for selection of Fire Captain?

OTHER COMMENTS:

*This form will be retained in the files of the Management Center
and will not be available to the Fire Department. Your assistance
is needed to help perfect the assessment laboratory process. You
are urged to be frank. It is not necessary to sign this form.

*This statement can be modified to meet local situations. The
important point to consider is that most candidates wish to be
assured that his comments cannot be used against him if they are
unfavorable.

(To be mailed after post-interviews,
but no later than 30 days following
Assessment Lab)

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

CANDIDATES' SECOND EVALUATION OF FIRE CAPTAIN EXAMINATION

It would be of great assistance to us in improving the assessment lab process to have your answers to the questions below. We have deleted one of the questions on the original evaluation form and made two additions. Your replies will be retained in the files of the Management Center and will not be available to the Fire Department. Please be frank; no signature is necessary. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

1. From your experience in the exercises, do you think you could be fairly rated in comparison with the other candidates?
2. Do you think the assessment laboratory is a good process to use in a promotional examination such as the one for Fire Captain?
3. Which do you feel is the better process to be used in the selection of Fire Captain: the assessment lab or the oral interview?
4. What qualifications, if any, required for a successful Fire Captain, do you feel could not be demonstrated through the assessment laboratory?
5. Please list any suggestions you may have for improvements in the time, physical facilities, individual exercises or other aspects of the assessment lab process.

If you have any further comments, please write them on the reverse side of this sheet. We would appreciate having this form returned no later than _____. Thank you for your cooperation.

Model for Fire Captain Examination
Assessment Lab, Management Center
West Valley College
Campbell, California
March, 1974

OBSERVERS' EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENT LAB

It would be of great assistance to us in improving the assessment lab process to have your candid comments on the following questions. We would appreciate having them returned no later than _____. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

1. Do you think that the exercises afforded each candidate adequate opportunity to be fairly rated in comparison with the other candidates?
2. How would you compare the assessment lab process with the oral examination as a method for selection of fire captain?
3. Do you consider the assessment laboratory a good process for use in a promotional examination such as the one for fire captain?
4. Do you believe there are qualifications necessary to the successful execution of a fire captain's duties which the candidates did not have an opportunity to demonstrate? If you do, please note.
5. Please list any suggestions you may have for improvement (time, physical facilities, individual exercises or other aspects of the assessment lab process).

We would welcome any additional comments. Thank you for your cooperation.

MAR 21 1974

California State University, San José

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95192

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department of Psychology

(408) 277-2786

March 19, 1974

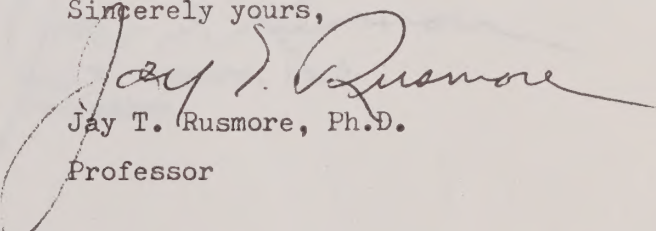
Mr. Donald S. Macrae, Coordinator
Assessment Laboratory
West Valley Community College
Campbell, CA, 95008

Dear Mr. Macrae:

I have reviewed the development of the assessment exercises for the position of fire captain. Your work marks a substantial advance in promotional procedures. The incorporation of job elements into exercises which simulate critical on-the-job situations has been very carefully and professionally accomplished. As recently used within the Palo Alto Fire Department its job-related content identified it as unusually valid and fair for the determination of critical behaviors.

The documentation and record system used permit a constructive follow-up. I recommend a continuing review of the problem to identify more kinds of behavior to be included in the exercises and I recommend that a one-year follow-up study be scheduled to identify both problems and satisfactions which have resulted from the use of these particular exercises.

Sincerely yours,


Jay T. Rusmore, Ph.D.

Professor

MANAGEMENT CENTER

MAR 26 1974

California State University, San Jose

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95192

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department of Psychology

(408) 277-2786

March 25, 1974

Helen Powley
West Valley College
Campbell, CA

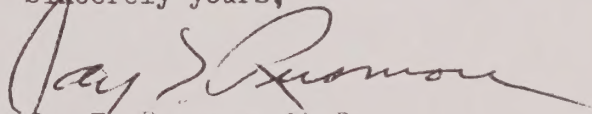
Dear Ms. Powley:

The scattergrams which you recently sent me were all correctly prepared and were easy to interpret.

The relations among the items are very low and indicate that the information obtained in one test is different from that obtained in any other. Because this condition is not modifiable, all items must be retained. A loss of one test would mean a loss of information that is not obtainable from any other test in the total battery.

If there had been any possibility of shortening the total testing time, this analysis would have found it. There is no way.

Sincerely yours,



Jay T. Rusmore, Ph.D.
Professor

INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES LIBRARY
JAN 26 1974
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CALIF.

77 01893

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C123319835

